

Senator Harkin: A Champion for Iowa's Clinics

“Community health centers are a critical part of Iowa’s health care system and on the front lines of providing care to more than 181,000 Iowans every year. I fight to support the creation of community health centers because I know these facilities provide crucial healthcare for Iowa families in need.” – Senator Tom Harkin

For twenty-five years, Senator Tom Harkin has worked to expand community health centers (CHCs) in Iowa by providing vital resources to ensure that all Iowans have access to affordable, quality health care. Under Harkin’s leadership, national funding for CHCs has tripled from \$496 million in 1989 to \$1.5 billion in 2014. Building on this long legacy of expanding annual funding for community health centers, Harkin also successfully included an \$11 billion Community Health Centers Fund in the *Affordable Care Act* (ACA) to significantly expand the number of sites that provide preventative health services and primary care in underserved communities across the nation. During this time, Harkin’s support has helped to increase the number of CHCs in Iowa from only 2 in 1989 to 14 in 2014. These centers now serve Iowans at over 85 different clinics throughout the state. **Among the highlights of Harkin’s work to provide access to quality, affordable health care for Iowans:**

Early investments in health centers to serve rural and underprivileged communities:

- Secured seed funding for many Iowa communities to begin planning and developing community health centers in all corners of the State. This crucial early support enabled Iowa communities to open clinics and to make successful bids for ongoing federal support.
- Provided funding for CHC initiatives such as opening CHC facilities in communities from Burlington to Council Bluffs.
- Allocated federal funds to ensure that every CHC in Iowa has at least one dental chair.
- Secured resources to purchase equipment and implement the first statewide electronic health record system for CHCs.

Providing funding to open community health centers across the state:

- \$1,825,000 in 2003 to construct Burlington’s Medical and Dental Clinics. These clinics are housed on the grounds of Southeastern Community College, which provides hands on training for nursing and health aide students.
- \$573,000 in 2006 to plan and construct the Community Health Center of Fort Dodge. The new health care facility helped Fort Dodge transition from two free health care clinics that were only open a few nights a month to a full-time, comprehensive primary health care center that serves all of Webster County.
- \$370,000 in 2006 to plan and equip the Crescent Community Health Center in Dubuque.
- \$1,533,000 since 1997, for the planning, construction, and renovation of the Siouxland Community Health Center clinics. The funding also provided for the construction of a satellite site in Sioux Center that emerged as a result of the mobile clinic — a successful initiative that Harkin implemented in 2003. In response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Harkin worked to send Iowa’s CHC mobile clinics with aid supplies to help the people of the Gulf Coast.
- \$963,000 for the Council Bluffs Community Health Center since 1998, including the construction of a new clinic.

Expanding vital community health center services:

- Since 1997, Harkin has secured \$2,393,000 for the Davenport Community Health Center for services and support, including opening a dental clinic and expanding the pharmacy and pediatric department.

Implementing the first statewide electronic health record system:

- Between fiscal years 2005 and 2009, Harkin secured \$482,000 to implement and provide resources for the first statewide Health IT system that helped bring cutting edge electronic health records and e-prescribing technology to Iowa’s community health centers.

For more information, please visit Senator Harkin’s website at <http://harkin.senate.gov/>, or follow him on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/tomharkin> or Twitter <https://twitter.com/SenatorHarkin>.